Unclaimed vehicles lying in parking lot of Connaught place

†837. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of years since when some vehicles have been lying unclaimed in the underground parking at Connaught Place, Delhi alongwith the number of such vehicles and whether Government have names and addresses of owners of the said vehicles; and

(b) if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor and the decision Government would like to take for disposal of all vehicles lying unclaimed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) and (b) 28 scooters and 26 cars were found to be lying unclaimed in the underground parking lot of "Palika Parking" at Connaught Place. Most of these vehicles have been lying unclaimed for the past about 5-7 years. The names and addresses of the owners of four of these unclaimed vehicles have since been obtained by the New Delhi Municipal Council and they have been advised to remove these vehicles within 30 days failing which action to remove these vehicles would be taken. The action to ascertain the names and addressed of the owners of the ramaining vehicles has also been initiated.

Loss incurred by Hindustan Copper Limited

838. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hindustan Copper Limited has been incurring losses continuously for the last many years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that inspite of reduction in the man power of HCL under VRS for which Government has given grant-in-aid for more than Rs. 500 crores during the last two years has also not helped HCL to arrest the losses; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor and what remedial action is being taken by Government thereon?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Yes, Sir. Losses made by Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) since 1996-97 are detailed below:

Year	Net Loss (in Rupees Crores)
1996-97	130.62
1997-98	169.72
1998-99	51.20
1999-2000	147.46
2000-01	105.80
2001-02	184.04
2002-03 (up to Jan. 03)	127.14

(b) and (c) Out of the budgetary support of Rs. 660 crore provided by the Government as grant-in-aid during the period 1998-99 to 2002-03 for separation of surplus manpower, the company has utilized Rs. 550 crore by reducing its manpower from 18,400 to 7,900. Apart from the above the company has also closed three of its uneconoSmic mines by reducing excess manpower at different spheres of operation. Despite a reduciton of 105007 in manpower, the company has been making losses due to poor grade of copper ore with low precious metal content, substantial increase in the price of power tariff and petroleum products, decrease in import duty of refined copper, stiff competition in copper manufacture, fall in international prices of copper, uneconomic size of smelters and manpower which is still in excess.

In order to maintain the operation of the company following remedial action are being taken:

(i) Closure of another two uneconomic mines Surda mines at Indian Copper Complex, Ghatsila district east Singhbhum, Jharkhand and Khetri Mine at Khetri Copper Complex, Khetri Nagar, Rajasthan.

(ii) Sale/transfer of company's townships at different locations where the operations have been closed.

(iii) Sale of company's non producing assests namely excess plant and machinery, building, land etc.

Lifting of ban on asbestos mining

839. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether mining of asbestos is banned presently in India on health grounds;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that some countries have lifted the ban on asbestos mining after research reports established that asbestos did not affect the health of miners;

(c) if so, whether the lease holders of asbestos mines in Rajasthan have sought lifting of the ban on asbestos mining; and

(d) if so, the Centre's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Grant of fresh mining leases and renewal of existing mining leases for asbestos are presently banned in India on health grounds.

(b) No, the Central Government are not aware of some countries having lifted ban on asbestos mining.

(c) and (d) Asbestos mines owners of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have represented before the Central Government to allow grant of fresh/ renewal of asbestos mining leases in the country. Government have not lifted ban on grant of fresh/renewal of mining leases for asbestos in the country.

Manganese ore reserves in Orissa

840. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what are the various manganese ore reserve areas in Orissa;

(b) whether the manganese ore procured from those areas are exported;